

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
UHSAA Office and Virtual
Tuesday, July 28, 2020
10:00 a.m.

Those in attendance: Board Members: Marilyn Richards, Roger Pulsipher, Dale Whitlock, Adam Britt, Cory Anderson, Sam Jarman, Larry Bergeson, Jerre Holmes, Tom Sherwood, Steven Gordon, Jim Wood, Bryan Durst, Greg Miller and Laura Belnap. Staff Members: Rob Cuff, Jeff Cluff, Brenan Jackson, Jon Oglesby and Jan Whittaker. Excused: Belinda Johnson. Minutes: Jeanne Widerburg.

1. **Welcome and Chair Business:** Chair Holmes welcomed all members to the meeting. He acknowledged some were present at the UHSAA Office and others through virtual means. Jeff Cluff welcomed media representatives who were attending virtually. Mr. Holmes excused Belinda Johnson.

A. Approval of Minutes:

- (1) May 21 meeting (summary on UHSAA website)
- (2) July 9 meeting (summary on UHSAA website)

MOTION: Ms. Richards made the motion to approve the BOT Minutes for May 21 and July 9. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried.

B. Approval of Board Agenda:

MOTION: Mr. Jarman made the motion to approve the Board Agenda. Mr. Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2. **UHSAA Fall Sports and Activities:** Mr. Holmes said the purpose of the meeting was to discuss any issues that pertain to moving forward with fall sports. Competitions have begun in some sports and others begin within two weeks. He feels everyone is excited for first competitions, but also have concerns for crowd control, willingness of patrons to wear masks and ability to ensure the safety of athletes.

Mr. Cuff reported he had sent to each member a document created by the UHSAA staff with sport by sport general best practices and guidelines. The *Return to Play* guidelines and protocol has been updated since the July 9 meeting to align with the Governor's 4.8 Plan. The Governor adjusted for Salt Lake City School district, that was in orange, to return to face to face education if their school board approves. The BOT will need to approve the updated/current *Return to Play* document.

Mr. Jackson stated with the new 4.8 Lead Together Plan he began working to update the *Return to Play* document to facilitate the Salt Lake City School District moving forward with sports. The Governor's plan does not give specific direction in certain areas. There are items for discussion for County Health Departments and districts for additional guidelines. He discussed the changes to UHSAA *Return to Play* guidelines have been developed with the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. There are five schools in the orange phase – East, Highland, West, Judge Memorial and Rowland Hall. The Governor has approved them going back to school and their school board has approved participating in sports. Mr. Sherwood said the orange phase would

not have spectators, but some schools in Salt Lake District are playing games away so they can have spectators.

Ms. Richards asked if any members had heard discussion to only play region games. Mr. Cuff said he had received two emails asking about region play only. On July 9, there was some discussion for other plans such as delaying the season and that would cut out some of the season. The Executive Committee will be helping to monitor issues as the season begins. If we need to shorten the season, the principals wanted to get in as many games as possible. We are moving forward as determined on July 9, but it is being monitored as we go forward.

Mr. Sherwood reported that the Wasatch Front districts met to talk about a collaborative effort to start sports in the fall. Most districts have agreed to 25% capacity for spectators. This will allow for social distancing and mask policing. It will be revisited around Labor Day. This would be for all levels. Every event will be ticketed (some events at no charge) to control spectators. Mr. Jarman said he is pleased there is some consistency along the Wasatch Front. Mr. Sherwood said if internet access is supported, his school is planning to live stream all levels of competition when possible.

Mr. Jarman asked, "If professional sports are not allowing fans, why is the UHSAA allowing spectators?" He wants to be able to give a good answer to that type of question. Mr. Sherwood said, in his opinion, we are dealing with minors, and especially in football, a parent should be there in case of an emergency. We also have smaller spectator attendance. Starting at 25% in venues makes it very manageable. Mr. Bergeson said Washington County Health Department is allowing more flexibility for outdoor events. They are looking at options for outdoor events. School masks will be mandatory inside the school.

Ms. Belnap wanted members to know that Amber Shill's (former BOT member) parents were killed in an automobile accident last month. She felt members would like to be made aware.

Ms. Belnap felt the rules need to be more specific than general. Masks are required, but are they required to be on their face. Some are wearing netted face masks. How are we going to enforce? She wanted to know who will approve the template increasing number of people at an event. How do we police and where does the responsibility start and end?

Mr. Jackson said the *Return to Play* template indicates "face coverings" and should be strictly observed in orange or yellow phase. The event management template is to be filled out and kept at the school if the county health department requests to see the form. He said some of the state sites will be limiting the number of spectators at their site for contact tracing. Weber State University will only accommodate about 4,000 so that would be the cut off for tickets. The number of spectators will depend on the site and county health department.

Mr. Cuff said communication is paramount. Everyone needs to communicate with the county health departments, venues, schools, teams – everyone. Teams need to communicate early so fans will know what to expect and where the game is being played. There will be no forfeits. If two teams cannot play the game, it will be considered a "no contest" and not a forfeit. If one of the teams in the cancelled game can still play, the staff will try to match them up with another team that is able to play. Communication is the key. The staff will be presenting at the UIAAA Conference and the Executive Committee is meeting next week. The staff will be going over the forms and answering questions. Ms. Belnap asked who developed the template that allows for additional numbers at an event. Mr. Jackson said the template was developed by the Governor's

office. She encouraged the safest approach and sometimes that might be to not play the game. The health department should be number one in the discussions and not school to school.

Mr. Holmes called on Senator Jake Anderegg for comment. Senator Anderegg said the biggest concern of the legislature is aspects to ensure safety when outcomes are still unsure. We are trying to flatten the curve and face masks help, but we need to consider the mental health of the youth. Sports are important avenues for the youth to participate. He agrees it is best to leave it up to the local health departments and engage with them. He recognizes there are several aspects including practices, games and crowd control. There are going to be scenarios that apply to one and not the other. It is important there is flexibility based upon infectious rates, etc. One size does not fit all. He would recommend to not take the most restrictive means in every instance. Mr. Holmes thanked him for his comments. Most have expressed the importance for flexibility and to look at individual cases.

Mr. Britt said it is difficult going day to day. Is there a magical number or threshold that the UHSAA will determine if a team can play? Mr. Holmes said it will probably be different for every county. In Summit County, they are looking at contact tracing and if student was wearing a mask. He has not seen a specific number because each situation could be different. Mr. Jarman said it will come down to the health departments on a case by case. He feels it important to leave it to the medical experts.

Mr. Sherwood said many principals have talked and nobody wants to be the guy who hosted a game and there was an outbreak. Everyone wants to be careful, but allow for some local control with the health departments. It is in the students' best interest to play. The community needs to return to some normalcy if it can be managed appropriately. Principals have spent the month of July planning for COVID19 for students to return to school and activities. The responsibility is not being taken lightly. Looking for policy and procedures for limited spectators and event management. He met with his coaches and told them they are in it for participation and it is not about the championship. Motivation for sports is for participation. They want the season to last as long as it can. They are trying to be responsible stewards. It is a different environment this year. Following protocols and due diligence in checking symptoms and temperatures will be important.

Mr. Bergeson said he agrees with Mr. Sherwood. They are working with the Washington County Health Department trying to return to normal as best as they can. We need to be good stewards, or we will find ourselves back in the orange or red phase. He mentioned Cache County cannot stay overnight and they were scheduled to play Pine View. They are trying to work on playing on a neutral field. There will be issues and they are limited to the number of schools they can play. Mr. Jarman offered to help find a site for the August 14 game. Mr. Holmes feels that coaches are being diligent and treating COVID19 as a potential injury and having student wear masks where possible to protect the safety of students.

A. Transfers: Mr. Holmes stated he had received a text regarding transfers under these unique circumstances and conditions. He was hoping to get a sense for how the BOT feels about the transfers.

Mr. Cuff said he appreciated the feedback from the last meeting. In the UHSAA Handbook, there is a clause that allows a student from a discontinued program or school closure to transfer to another school. It was determined that this would NOT apply because of COVID19 in-state or out-of-state. An in-state or out-of-state student must meet one of the components of the transfer rule to become eligible at the varsity level. All students are eligible at the sub-varsity level by

becoming a full-time student. The staff wanted to be on the same page with the Board regarding students from other states whose fall programs were delayed or postponed until spring. Those inquiring are being told we cannot guarantee eligibility unless they meet one of the transfer components for varsity eligibility and second, we cannot guarantee a full season. Games will only be played if we can provide safety in the best possible way and school in-person learning continues.

Mr. Van Wagoner said he has discussed the matter with Mr. Cuff because he is getting indications that many California and Arizona students are interested in coming to Utah to play because their schools are not open. Many feel strongly they should not be allowed to play here. He agrees with Mr. Cuff that they will need to meet one of the transfer components for varsity play. He has also heard the question whether remote learning is sufficient education one would ordinarily expect in high school. Can someone use that as a hardship? He has indicated to them we cannot say one school is better than another, but this is somewhat different circumstances. Why can't a student move where they are having in-person learning and then be eligible for sports? It is a difficult question.

Mr. Bergeson said the St. George area is getting hit hard with calls from Las Vegas. They are enforcing the transfer components for varsity play.

Mr. Holmes asked about their feeling about remote learning versus classroom learning. Is it a hardship?

Mr. Sherwood said he has faculty members bringing their children to Brighton because of no in-person learning in the Salt Lake School District. So, they are leaving for academics and it does not meet the current criteria for athletic transfer. He thinks it will come to a transfer hearing and we need to have discussions.

Mr. Cuff suggested they could have more discussions on August 20. There will be hearings prior to that date, but anyone can go through the hearing process and this situation could come up. He feels it will be a tough situation because remote learning could turn on a green light to go anywhere for in-person learning. Mr. Van Wagoner said they would be literally moving for academics. He would like a sense of the Board on this matter. Mr. Holmes said it is worthy of discussion, but most members were not prepared to discuss this topic. Mr. Cuff said some districts are still considering reopening school plans so maybe a decision does not need to be made at this point.

B. UHSAA Guidelines: Mr. Jackson would like to have the approval of the BOT to make changes to the UHSAA *Return to Play* Guidelines to adhere to the Governor's Lead Together Plan. The information would be sent to the BOT, but the document needs to be fluid. Mr. Bergeson said that is what is taking place with their reopening document and it is fluid. They make the changes and notify the school board. He thinks it would be a good practice for the Association as well. Ms. Belnap was concerned what would be considered minor or major changes. Some changes could literally change the process for athletes to participate. Mr. Cuff said the changes to the template would reflect the Lead Together Plan changes as they happen. Anything outside that would come back to the BOT for approval.

MOTION: Ms. Richards made the motion to approve the current *Return to Play* template and the staff would have the ability to make changes to keep aligned with the updates to the Lead Together Plan. Mr. Durst seconded the motion. Ms. Belnap would like to include the School Board of Education. Mr. Cuff said they will respect any directions from the School Board of

Education and discuss major changes with the BOT. Ms. Richards made a friendly amendment to include the School Board of Education with her motion. Motion approved.

Mr. Anderson asked to eliminate “mask” and use “face coverings.” He felt that would be helpful.

Mr. Gordon said there was some confusion about the protocol for fall sports sent by the UHSAA. He felt the protocol was strict and their county is in the green phase. He asked if he should follow the color phase guidelines or the sport specific protocol? The Health Department approved a yearbook signing with 500 students on the field with no masks. Mr. Jackson said the general guideline for sport by sport was a general overview for the entire state. The UHSAA Guidelines for colored phases corresponds to the Governors’ Lead Together Plan. The local county health department would be the best contact for specific direction and information working within the Governor’s 4.8 Plan.

MOTION: Mr. Jarman made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 am.